TUEBOR

We Will Protect

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"Think to a Finish!"

The Incident Command System

Do you ever think about being the senior police officer on duty when a big crisis occurs? Quick decisive action is called for and you're in charge. Do you have a plan? Do you have a decision-making formula to follow? You may have heard about the Incident Command System (ICS), but thought it too complex. The truth is, without realizing it, police routinely utilize ICS in small emergencies. From traffic accidents to criminal investigations, police have been trained to:

- Take command and immediately assess the incident;
- Perform initial investigative functions;
- Establish and maintain a perimeter;
- Contain the situation if needed;
- Perform emergency rescue and manage injuries;
- Assess damage and protect property;
- Coordinate the response of additional units and services;
- Maintain control until relieved or the incident is resolved;
- Complete an incident report to document the occurrence.

Police definitely know the fundamentals of Incident Command. However, in order to address larger occurrences with multiple responders, a structured Incident Command System is needed. First used in the 1970s to handle major wildfires, ICS is a paramilitary, interagency, incident management tool. The purpose of ICS is to provide COMMAND, CONTROL, & COORDINATION. ICS is built around 5 major functions: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance.

1. **Command** - The Incident Commander (IC) is responsible for all incident or event activity. The incident size and complexity will determine which other management functions will be filled. The command staff assists and reports directly to the IC.
2. **Operations** - Operations is responsible for implementing the strategy, referred to as the Incident Action Plan (IAP), as well as directing the tactical actions to meet incident objectives and priorities. There is only one Operations Chief (if activated by the IC) per operational period, but that position may have assistants as needed. The Operations Section commonly uses Branches, Divisions, Platoons, Groups, Task Forces and/or Strike Teams to maintain unity, chain of command and span of control.
3. **Planning** – Planning is responsible for creating the Incident Action Plan. The Planning Section also collects, documents, and displays the ongoing incident status, and watches the status of resources.
4. **Logistics** - Is responsible for providing adequate facilities, equipment, communications, food, lodging, medical, and other support services.
5. **Finance** - Responsible for tracking incident related costs, maintaining personnel and equipment records, and administering procurement contracts associated with the incident or event.

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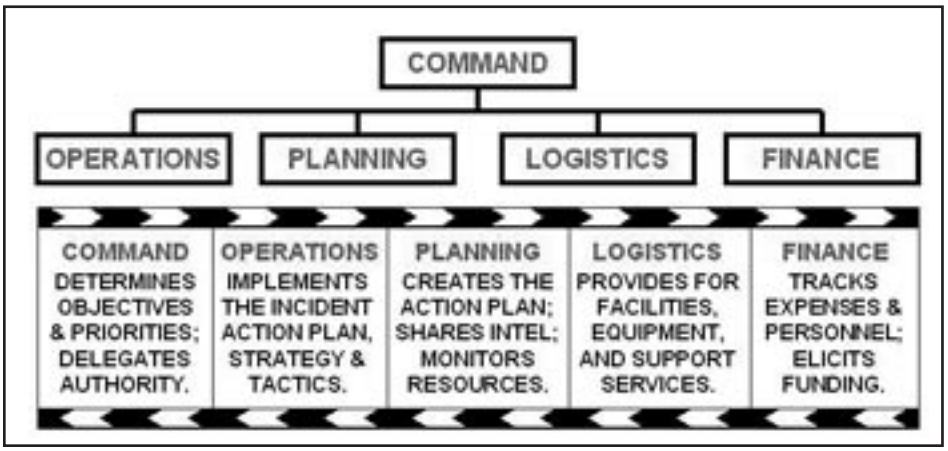

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Everything Starts With The Emergency Plan

It is important to note that the Incident Command System does NOT replace other parts of Emergency Management process. Nor does it replace terrorist training in chemical-biological-radiological-nuclear-explosive (CBRNE), riots, protests, bad weather, or other hazardous occurrences. ICS is the IMPLEMENTATION of these specialized Emergency Plans in an actual disaster. Failing to anticipate problems in the Emergency Plan sets you up for hesitation and failure.

> *"You better learn to keep a plan in mind, because you will not come up with something brilliant when your ass is in the fire."*
>
> *— Dr. Paul Whitesell*

With as many potential disasters facing police today, both contingency planning and training are essential to preparedness. For the most part, the average police officer has received little training and no practice in how to handle a large-scale critical incident. Put your system to the test. Go out and grab some of the real first responders – the police officers and their sergeants – and ask them the following questions:

1. Can you name the top ten terrorist targets in your city or county?
2. Where are hazmat accidents most likely to occur?
3. Do you have immediate access to the worksite's Emergency Response Plans? (If not, does your worksite even have Emergency Response Plans?)
4. Has everyone on your team trained and drilled on the plans?
5. When was the last drill in which everyone participated?
6. Specifically, what kind of hazmat, riot, terrorism, or other emergency training has your team received?
7. Has your team received any new equipment specifically designed for emergencies? Do they have quick access to it?
8. Have all your supervisors received training on the Incident Command System? Have they practiced it?

Scenario Planning

"Think to a finish," was the advice given by Field Marshall Viscount Allenby in 1902, a planning genius in the British Army. Many forces affect making a decision in a crisis. There are only a few of which you have any control. The best you can do is try to anticipate a crisis by making Emergency Response Plans, then take steps to mitigate negative consequences as events unfold in a real disaster.

If you use Scenario Planning with only one possible finish in mind, you're missing the point. The purpose of Scenario Planning is to broaden the array of possible futures that you are contemplating. Remember: All crisis and disasters are dynamic – no two hazmat situations have the same environment, no two riots have the same behavior. Scenario Planning should purposely anticipate change, ambiguity, and unpredictability. The question to constantly ask yourself when developing an Emergency Plan is, "What will we do if THIS happens?"

Admiral Chester Nimitz credited years of planning and contemplation for his ability to respond to trouble. He would say after W.W.II that his training started back in 1922, while playing war-games at the Naval War College. Nimitz would write, "The courses were so thorough, that after the start of World War II, nothing that happened in the Pacific was strange or unexpected."

Implementing the Plan: Decisiveness in the Midst of Crisis

How does a police supervisor use the Incident Command System to implement an Emergency Plan in a quick decisive manner?

The first thing that an Incident Commander should do upon arriving at an incident is establish "unity of command." It is essential for the Incident Commander to establish a command center and good communications. Leaders need to create organizations that are less hierarchical, that recognize

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After-Action Report – Seattle World Trade Riots: Seattle Police came under attack for their handling of the violent protests at the World Trade Organization Conference, Nov 29 through Dec 3, 1999. The Incident Command System was denounced by downtown merchants, protesters and even police officers. An After-Action Report conducted by the police department reveals that, despite intelligence warning of potential violence by a small band of anarchists, SPD commanders put their faith in historical precedent and relied on Seattle's tradition of peaceful protest. According to the report, Seattle's Emergency Plan for riots failed to address "worst cases." There was insufficient attention made for organizing mutual aid, so arriving police contingents sat idly on the fringes waiting for SPD to deploy them. There was no contingency for replacing personal protective OC pepper spray. But the worst problem was that Incident Command did not know in real time what was happening or where the platoons were. Consequently, SPD command was slow to send backup where needed. Several specialized "flying squads" that were trained to single out and arrest troublemakers were never used, and SPD missed a crucial opportunity to remove the leadership of the anarchist element.

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and can deal with complex situations – particularly rapid change. However, leaders also need to recognize, that in some areas, decentralization may not be appropriate – an organization that becomes too decentralized runs the risk of anarchy and ineffectiveness.

The second thing the Incident Commander must realize is that waiting for an abundance of information before making a decision can be dangerous, since it may allow the incident to grow in both size and complexity. The key is to quickly recognize the hazards, weigh the consequences, choose a plan, and take decisive action. The plan can be modified once it is put into action by keeping your options open.

Obviously, an effective decision making system must be simple enough to remember under stress, quick to use, easy to share, and still profound enough to solve important problems. While no one approach will fit all situations, the following four-step model will provide a flexible framework for most critical decisions:

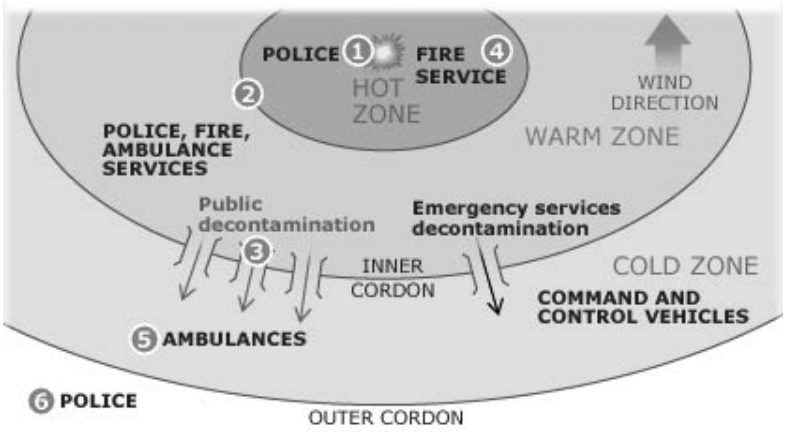
1. Quick Size-Up: *What Plan Do You Start With?*

The first and most important aspect of making any decision is to properly identify the problem. While this may seem simple, supervisors often put the cart before the horse, so to speak.

Diagnose the problem in terms of causes, not symptoms. The solution to a traffic jam caused by an accident is far different from the solution to a traffic jam caused by a hazmat spill. Finding the cause will usually mean finding the Emergency Plan you need to start with. Determining priorities is the next step.

2. Set Priorities: *What Do You Want To Accomplish?*

The Incident Commander must never forget, no matter what the situation, these objectives and priorities never change: *Life Safety; Protecting Critical Systems & Property; Incident Stabilization.* This is the simple part. The hard part is Defining these priorities in terms of what you want to accomplish, i.e., evacuate or isolate, move traffic or close traffic, etc. For you see, knowing the priorities only creates another question: What are the best methods to achieve these ends? Defining priorities is difficult if you don't have expertise to draw on, which takes us to step three.



The safety of civilians and first responders depends on coordinated effort and decisive action. In bio-chem circumstances, protecting the emergency responders takes precedence or they will not be able provide protection for the at-risk population. The primary functions that must be performed at any toxic release remain fairly consistent, generally involving: Incident "size-up" and assessment; Scene control and establishment of a perimeter; Gather information and product identification; Establishment of a decontamination area; Entry preparation; Rescue of victims; Triage and decontamination; Containment and neutralization of the release; Secure evidence and treat as a crime scene.

3. Weigh The Alternatives: *Consequences v. Success*

What alternative has the best chance for success with the least negative consequences? All decision making is a matter of conflict between competing alternatives. Your true enemy is time. If you don't have expertise in a particular area, find it in someone else – quick!

Some supervisors think that asking others for input is a sign of weakness, or that making a decisive decision means rushing a solution. But you could make matters worse if you don't take at least a minute to think. Use not only experience and logic, but try to imagine worse case scenarios. Here are some suggestions for weighing alternatives:

- First off, estimate how much time you have to make a decision before the situation starts to deteriorate. Start preparing for all matter of contingencies while you consider the problem.
- Talk to your subordinates, fellow supervisors and specialists. Ask what they have experienced and if they have any ideas.
- List all the ideas you can. Warning: Don't analyze alternative ideas as you get them – that will slow you down. Start analyzing ideas only after you are satisfied you have enough to work with.
- The more serious the problem, the more urgent that you pass the problem up the chain of command, even if you have no time to wait for a response before taking action.
- If you have time, weigh the pros and cons of each alternative and then rate each by assigning it a numerical value.

"Is the proposed operation likely to succeed? What might be the consequences of failure? Is it in the realm of practicality in terms of resources?"

— Admiral Chester Nimitz

Which decision has the worst consequences for failure? This doesn't necessarily mean the most drawbacks. Some decisions have "many" drawbacks but they are "easily" dealt with. Other decisions may have only "one" drawback, but it may have "dangerous" ramifi-

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cations that can't be easily changed. Consider all the political, legal, and safety implications – sometimes a less "perfect" but more "balanced" decision might be your best bet. Other times, you only have two or three options, and all of them stink. In such cases, moving fast to adjust is even more critical.

Which decision has the best chances for success? Is there some procedure or precedent that will guide you? On the other hand, do you feel that some of the decisions that have been made previously were actually inadequate, and have only succeeded out of luck? Try not to lower standards of safety, performance, or ethics in return for success. Unfortunately, first responders are often forced to choose alternatives under imperfect circumstances. This is when leadership becomes a truly lonely experience.

4. Strategy and Tactics: *How Will You Implement The Plan?*

Now you have sized-up the problem, set your priorities, and weighed your alternatives, it's time to determine an overall Strategy and Tactics for operation. You need to determine:

- **"What" You Will Do (Overall Strategy)**
- **"When" You Will Do It (Can you wait?)**
- **"Who" Will Do It (How will you divide your resources?)**
- **"How" Will It Be Done (Specific Tactics)**

Strategy and Tactics are related terms referring, respectively, to large-scale and small-scale planning to achieve success. "Strategy" means designing a broad, flexible plan for a desired outcome, i.e., controlling a civil protest in order to protect lives and property.

"Tactics" are the specific methods of operation you have chosen to obtain the strategic outcome, i.e., utilizing three divisions of police to contain the protest, with a special response team to remove law breakers, with rescue and medical in reserve. Tactics become more specific as each decision is made, i.e., how will the special response team penetrate the crowd? As situations change, both

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After-Action Report – September 11, 2001: In the wake of the 9/11 tragedy, the New York Fire Department sought the assistance of the United States Naval War College to conduct its After-Action Review. Here are just a few points:

- Locating the incident command center too close to the scene, inside the south tower, became obvious after a second hijacked plane forced its evacuation. A Burger King soon became a temporary headquarters for the police.
- "I don't think this has too much longer to go. I would evacuate all people within the area of that second building," the pilot of a police helicopter reported. Yet most firefighters never heard those warnings, their radio system was failing frequently and wasn't connected to the police system anyway.
- While there was great bravery and character exhibited, the Naval War College concluded there was a lack of command and control at the scene. Police did not coordinate with fire commanders, the official IC leaders for the evacuation, due to bad communications – both technical and political. Eagerness to respond put both police officers and fire fighters at risk as too many rescuers were sent into the towers.

Twelve minutes after the south tower was hit, another plane crashed into the Pentagon. After the crisis, an After-Action Review was conducted by Arlington County and supporting jurisdictions. As in New York, responding units acted with honor and courage. But as in New York, you always find ways to improve the Emergency Plan:

- Arlington did not have a mobile command center with an integrated radio system.
- There was poor access control, no prearranged mobilization sites, and arriving personnel could not find the incident command center.
- Some replacement units waited and waited for directions that never came, while other units were continually reassigned until the point of exhaustion.
- Protective gear and breathing apparatus were in short supply.
- There was poor coordination by EMS and there was uneven distribution of the injured to area hospitals.
- Recall of off-duty personnel was difficult because of outdated logs.
- Overnight accommodations were not part of the Emergency Plan and many exhausted responders slept on floors.
- Managing the flow of new intelligence was also a problem, and unfounded rumors caused time consuming and unnecessary evacuations of working areas.

Following September 11, a review of emergency plans for private facilities, such as nuclear plants, revealed shortcomings in Emergency Plans most often involving mass evacuations, communicating to the public, and the ramifications of secondary strikes by terrorists.

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strategy and tactics sometimes need to be reassessed and adjusted; i.e., the entire crowd is beginning to destroy property – did you remember to bring teargas and gas masks? Do you have back-up PD's at a "staging area"?

If after going through this process you're still not sure what is the best decision to make, you need to realize that there is a difference between the best you can do and the best you need to do. We're not suggesting you adopt a philosophy of mediocrity, but sometimes holding back for the perfect solution is too costly. Sometimes doing your job means you just need to go in.

After-Action Report – Baltimore CSX Derailment: "What should we do?" Incident Commanders asked when a freight train derailed in a downtown Baltimore tunnel July 18, 2001, spewing clouds of thick smoke and forcing postponement of an Orioles doubleheader with the Texas Rangers. Sixty CSX train cars came off the track in the one-mile tunnel – some were carrying hazardous materials. Though Baltimore's emergency planners had long known that a devastating chemical accident could occur in the train tunnel under Howard Street, its 440 page Emergency Plan failed to consider the tunnel or deal with toxic spills. In most chemical emergencies people are instructed to "shelter in place," closing windows and turning off air conditioners to keep out toxic fumes. But Baltimore's schools, hospitals and nursing homes had no such plan.

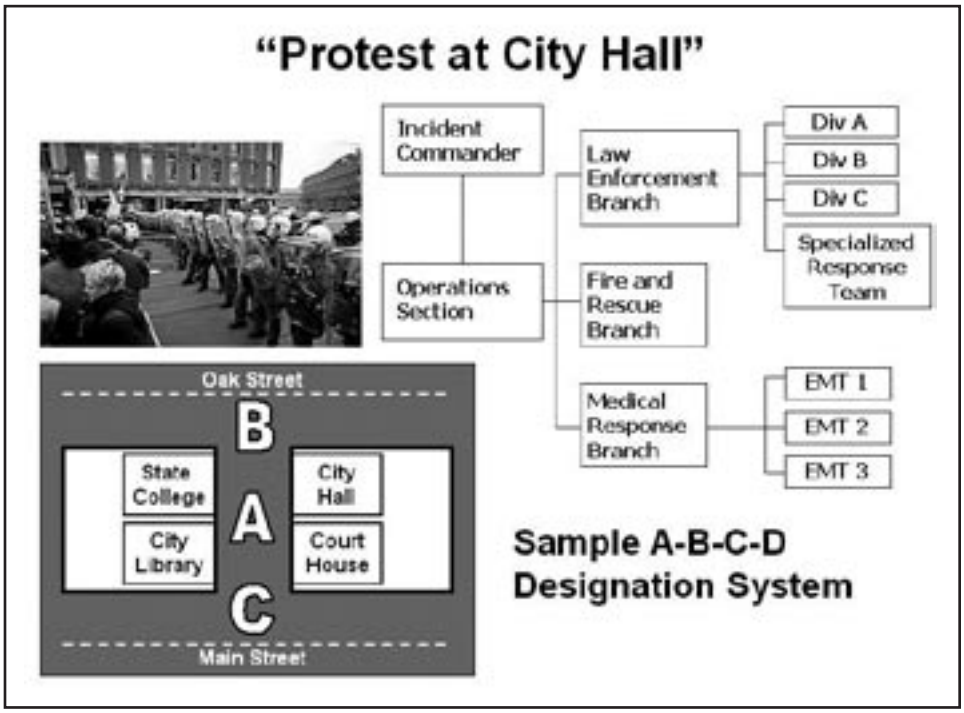
Taking Action: Putting It All Together

1. TAKE CHARGE:
Establish a central command.

At the start, it is better to impose slight over-control than to lose control. You must immediately establish a "command presence" so that people will know where to turn for direction. It is easier to remove controls (or ease them) than it is to implement control after things start happening.

2. SHORTEN CONTROL:
Delegate as soon as practical.

The longer you impose over-control, the greater the likelihood of a distraction that will result in you making a mistake. Don't overuse your authority. Delegate as soon as practical, but stay in frequent contact. Get your people working for you.



3. MOVE FAST TO ADJUST:
Continually seek updates.

This is critical to implementing a new decision and achieving the objective. Since your initial decisions may have been based on insufficient information, be ready to adjust as new data becomes available. You should be constantly asking for feedback and searching for updated intelligence.

4. BE DECISIVE:
Share good intelligence promptly.

Failure to make a decision is frustrating and demoralizing to your subordinates. A decisive supervisor will always prevail. This does not mean taking reckless gambles in an effort to speed things up, it does mean having the courage to share information and try things that make sense. No matter how things go, take the blame for mistakes and give any credit for success to your subordinates.

5. DON'T MICRO-MANAGE:
Watch the big picture / Prepare for backup.

The temptation is to become over-involved in all aspects of the project. The danger is that you could ignore important matters by spending too much time on small issues. If you properly delegate, trust your subordinates to get the job done and keep watching the big picture. You have

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enough to do dealing with the larger problem. Also, don't punish small mistakes during the operation – there will be time to evaluate the process later. Leaders achieve great results by concentrating on the mission's successful completion.

Conclusion

To help maximize interagency response, the Incident Command System has been mandated by the Department of Homeland Security. To fill in the gap between inter-agency response drills, tabletop and computer simulated exercises can be used (like the military uses war games), in order to ensure that all first responders are sharp and decisive when the real thing comes along.

The police officers at your disposal can be brave, well trained, and self-restrained in the face of provocation – this is enough to make a supervisor look good when an emergency is small in scale. But in large-scale disasters, the skill and bravery of good police officers can be wasted if commanders cannot read the chaos and organize a response. The bigger the crisis, the more important the Incident Command System becomes, and the more leadership is needed to coordinate and direct activities.

For Incident Command and other crisis management training, search under "Emergency Management" at the Michigan State Police website www.michigan.gov/msp. Also check FEMA's website at www.fema.gov, and the Department of Homeland Security at www.dhs.gov/dhspublic.

After-Action Reviews

"We should not second-guess the people at the scene, or the way they handled it that day — they did a terrific job… [but] I think we should second-guess our procedures, our policies, and our history."

- NYPD Commander, after Sept. 11

Don't Drink And Drive: Texas Uses Real-Life Tragedy To Send Strong Message

Early on Sunday morning, September 19, 1999, Jacqueline Saburido, 20, and four friends were on their way home from a birthday party. Reggie Stephey, an 18-year-old star football player, was on his way home after drinking beer with some buddies. On a dark road on the outskirts of Austin, Texas, Reggie's SUV veered into the Oldsmobile carrying Jacqui and the others. Two passengers in the car were killed at the scene. Within minutes, the car caught fire.

An off-duty police officer was traveling in the opposite direction and immediately called for assistance. As the fire grew, the officer frantically pulled bodies out of the wreckage one-by-one. Jacqui was the last to be pulled from the wreckage, as she was pinned in the front passenger seat and could not be removed until mechanical assistance arrived. The officer could do nothing but listen to the pain of Jacqui's screams, wishing desperately for some way to extinguish the fire.

Jacqui was burned over 60% of her body; no one thought she could survive. But Jacqui lived. Her hands were so badly burned that she no longer can use them. She lost her hair, her ears, her nose, her left eyelid and much of her vision. She has had more than 40 operations since the crash and has many more to go. In June 2001 Reggie Stephey was convicted of two counts of intoxication manslaughter for the deaths of Jacqui's two friends. He was sentenced to seven years in prison and fined $20,000.

Jacqui struggles everyday to restore her life and further the cause against drunk driving. When the Texas Department of Transportation first conceived of using Jacqui's story as part of a public campaign, some thought it was too strong an image. But when asked about the impact of her story, teens responded that this was precisely the kind of hard-core message they needed to keep them off the roads after drinking. The days of sugar-coated messages are over, teens need to see the consequences of inappropriate behavior. www.texasdwi.org

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